

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A printing apparatus comprising:
 - a machine frame;
 - a cover assembly pivotally connected to said machine frame and moveable between closed and opened positions;
- 5 a fuser assembly mounted in said machine frame, said fuser assembly and including:
 - a hot roll;
 - a pressure roll for forming a fuser nip with said hot roll; and
 - loading means applying force to said pressure roll against said hot roll;
- 10 a nip release mechanism operable on said loading means to alternately position said loading means in loading and unloading conditions of said pressure roll against said hot roll; and
 - a linkage assembly interconnecting said cover assembly and said nip release mechanism for operating said nip release mechanism by moving said cover assembly between opened and closed positions.
2. The printing apparatus of claim 1, said fuser assembly including a fuser frame removably mounted in said machine frame.
3. The printing apparatus of claim 2, said nip release mechanism including a cam rotatably mounted in said machine frame and a cam follower rotatably mounted in said fuser frame.
4. The printing apparatus of claim 3, including locking means for securing said pressure roll in an open nip position.
5. The printing apparatus of claim 4, said locking means including an arm on said cam follower engageable with a locking structure on said fuser frame.
6. The printing apparatus of claim 5, said loading means including a bell crank and a spring.

7. The printing apparatus of claim 6, said cam follower being engaged with said bell crank for moving said bell crank by movement of said cam follower.

8. The printing apparatus of claim 7, said cam follower being moveable angularly relative to said bell crank.

9. The printing apparatus of claim 8, said cam follower frictionally engaged by said cam, for angular movement of said cam follower relative to said bell crank upon rotation of said cam.

10. The printing apparatus of claim 8, said bell crank having a slot, and said cam follower having an enlarged head received in said slot of said bell crank.

11. The printing apparatus of claim 1, including locking means for securing said pressure roll in an open nip position.

12. The printing apparatus of claim 11, said locking means including an arm on said cam follower engageable with a locking structure on said fuser frame.

13. A fuser nip release mechanism for a printing apparatus having a machine frame, a cover assembly pivotally connected to the machine frame and a fuser module having a hot roll, a pressure roll nip against the hot roll and loading means including a bell crank for moving said pressure roll with respect to said hot roll, said fuser nip release mechanism comprising:

actuating means to alternately position said loading means in loaded and non-loaded conditions of the pressure roll against the hot roll; and

a linkage assembly connecting said actuating means and the cover assembly for moving said actuating means in response to opening and closing the cover

10 assembly.

14. The release mechanism of claim 13, said actuating means including a cam rotated by said linkage means and a cam follower engageable with said cam and connected to said loading means.

15. The release mechanism of claim 14, said cam being rotatably mounted in the machine frame and said cam follower being mounted in said fuser module.

16. The release mechanism of claim 15, including locking means for securing the pressure roll in an open nip position.

17. The release mechanism of claim 16, said locking means being contained in the fuser module, and the fuser module being removable from the machine frame.

18. A nip release mechanism for a printing apparatus having a machine frame, a cover assembly rotatably connected to the machine frame and a removable fuser module including a hot roll, a pressure roll and loading means for holding the pressure roll against the hot roll, said nip release mechanism comprising:

5 a movable component in the machine frame connected to the cover to be moved by movement of the cover between opened and closed positions;

a follower in the fuser module engageable with said movable component, said follower being moved by movement of said movable component; and

10 a connection between said follower and the loading means for moving the loading means in response to movement of said follower.

19. The nip release mechanism of claim 18, said movable component including a cam rotatably connected to the machine frame.

20. The nip release mechanism of claim 18, including locking structure for securing the pressure roll in an open nip position relative to the hot roll, said locking structure including a first movable component associated with said follower and a second fixed component engageable with said first component, said second 5 component being within the fuser module.